I CLAIM:

1.   A method for delivering a communication for a customer from a
5   server to a client vehicle communication unit (VCU) installed in a vehicle of the
customer, the method comprising:

establishing a connection between the server and the client VCU;
and

acquiring an ignition status from the client VCU as an indication of
10   whether the customer is available in the vehicle for receiving the communication.

2.   The method of claim 1 wherein the communication is one of the
group consisting of a voicemail message, a facsimile (FAX), an E-mail message,
and a transfer of data.
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3.   The method of claim 2 wherein delivering the communication
further comprises annunciating the type of communication available for delivery.

4.   The method of claim 1 further comprising delivering the
20   communication to the client VCU upon acquiring an IGNITION ON status.

5.   The method of claim 4 wherein delivering the communication
further comprises:

the client VCU annunciating delivery of the communication prior to
25   actual delivery of the communication; and

delaying actual delivery of the communication until the customer
initiates delivery of the communication at the client VCU.

6.   The method of claim 5 wherein annunciating the communication includes broadcasting an audible message to the customer inside the vehicle.

5   7.   The method of claim 5 wherein the customer initiates delivery with a verbal command.

8.   The method of claim 1 further comprising delaying delivery of the communication to the client VCU upon acquiring an IGNITION OFF status.

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9.   The method of claim 8 further comprising storing the communication at the server upon acquiring an IGNITION OFF status.

10.   The method of claim 9 further comprising periodically attempting to
15   establish a connection for updating the ignition status with the client VCU when an undelivered communication is stored at the server.

11.   The method of claim 9 further comprising storing an indication at the client VCU of a communication awaiting delivery from the server.

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12.   The method of claim 11 further comprising annunciating in the vehicle the indication of a communication awaiting delivery at the server, upon the client VCU acquiring an IGNITION ON status.

25   13.   The method of claim 1 further comprising storing the communication at the client VCU upon acquiring an IGNITION OFF status.

14.   The method of claim 13 further comprising also storing the communication at the server.

5   15.   The method of claim 13 further comprising delivering the communication to the customer upon the client VCU acquiring an IGNITION ON status.

16.   An apparatus for delivering a communication for a customer from a
10   server to a client vehicle communication unit (VCU) installed in a vehicle of the customer, the apparatus comprising:

        means for establishing a connection between the server and the client VCU; and

        means for acquiring an ignition status from the client VCU as an
15   indication of whether the customer is available in the vehicle for receiving the communication.

17.   The apparatus of claim 16 further comprising means for delivering the communication to the customer upon acquiring an IGNITION ON status.
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18.   The apparatus of claim 16 further comprising means for storing the communication until an IGNITION ON status is acquired.

19.   A computer readable medium storing a computer program for delivering a communication for a customer from a server to a client vehicle communication unit (VCU) installed in a vehicle of the customer, the computer

5   program comprising:

computer readable code for establishing a connection between the server and the client VCU; and

computer readable code for acquiring an ignition status from the client VCU as an indication of whether the customer is available in the vehicle for

10   receiving the communication.

20.   The computer readable medium of claim 19, wherein the computer program further comprises computer readable code for delivering the communication to the customer upon acquiring an IGNITION ON status.

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21.   The computer readable medium of claim 19, wherein the computer program further comprises computer readable code for storing the communication until an IGNITION ON status is acquired.